

Market Outlook

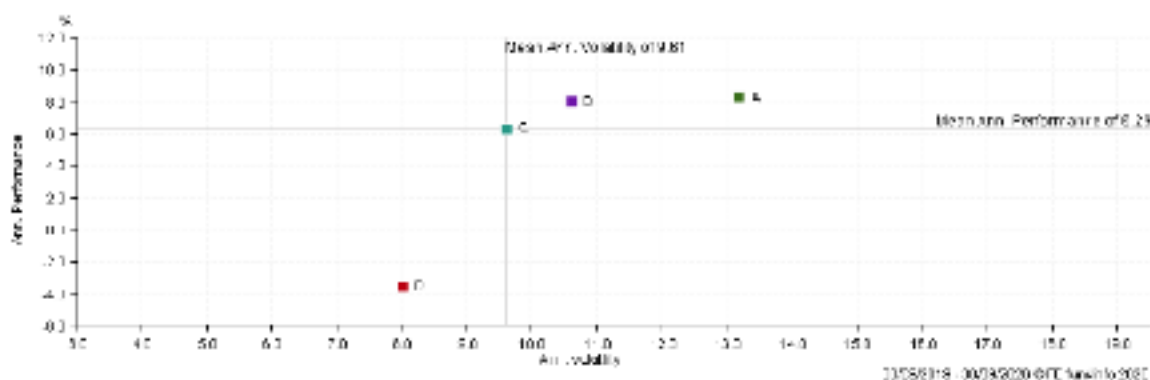
Global financial markets faced a more challenging backdrop over the third quarter of 2026 albeit still delivered positive returns, with geopolitics once again at the forefront of market movements. The resumption of tensions between the US and Iran reversed the de-escalation seen in the previous quarter with Brent crude again rising above \$100 a barrel as rising energy prices added to inflationary pressures across key developed economies. Government bond yields moved higher as a result with markets reassessing the outlook for inflation and monetary policy. The rise in fuel and broader energy costs increased concerns that inflation could remain above central bank targets for longer than previously expected, reversing earlier expectations that interest rates could begin to fall which weighed on overall fixed income performance over the quarter. Corporate fundamentals, however, remained a source of support, as strong earnings growth from key AI names lifted sentiment over the quarter, although investors became more discerning towards the time, as the bar for revenue and capital expenditure continues to be raised in order for the sector to justify their current valuations.

Central bank policy remained a key driver of sentiment over the quarter, as both the Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank raised interest rates in response to rising inflation. The Bank of England held interest rates at 5.25% at both its July and September meetings, although a 6-3 vote split in September, signalled growing concern within the committee that higher energy prices could feed through to more persistent domestic inflation. Against this backdrop the Long Hold Growth focused portfolios delivered positive returns over the period, with active UK, global and technology assets were key drivers of performance over the quarter. However, US small cap, fixed income and Japanese holdings lagged on the prospect of tighter monetary policy fed through. Across the Long Hold Growth suite, a focus on diversified, quality and growth assets helped the portfolios manage volatility throughout the quarter, whilst strongly participating during risk on periods. Looking ahead, the outlook remains sensitive to the trajectory of the US-Iran conflict and its impact on energy prices alongside the pace and extent of further monetary tightening.

Portfolio Positioning

The Long Hold portfolios remained fully invested throughout the quarter, with no changes made to the underlying holdings. Following the selective deployment of cash during the previous period, we remain comfortable with the current positioning and believe the portfolio is well aligned with our long-term investment outlook. While markets continued to experience periods of volatility, the portfolios' diversified exposure across regions, sectors and asset classes helped to reduce reliance on any single area of the market.

Portfolio Volatility



This scatter chart reflects annualised volatility and return in GBP over the past 7 years. Over the long term, we would expect the Balanced portfolio to exhibit volatility in line with the benchmark.

UK	US	GLOBAL	ASIA	EMERGING	FIXED INCOME	ALTERNATIVES
A	UK	US	GLOBAL	ASIA	EMERGING	FIXED INCOME
B	UK	US	GLOBAL	ASIA	EMERGING	FIXED INCOME
C	UK	US	GLOBAL	ASIA	EMERGING	FIXED INCOME
D	UK	US	GLOBAL	ASIA	EMERGING	FIXED INCOME

Important Information

All data in this document has been extracted from Analytics as of 1st October 2026. Past performance cannot be used as a guide to future performance and the value of your investment will fall as well as rise in value. You may not get back all of your investment and the final value of your investment will depend on the performance of your portfolio. Performance figures quoted include fund manager charges but exclude adviser, discretionary, custodian and switch charges. Unless stated, income is reinvested into the portfolio. The information contained in this document is for information purposes only. It does not constitute advice or a recommendation or an offer or solicitation for investment. Portfolio Expense is based on the Fusion platform and may vary for other platforms. Annualised Volatility and Max Loss Figures as detailed by FE Analytics over 5 years to period, where max loss represents the worst running return.